The NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALIST

CAIRNS

Journal of

NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALISTS CLUB
Box 991, P.O. CAIRNS, Q. 4870. Australia.
Phone 53 1183

FOUNDER PRESIDENT: The late DR. HUGO FLECKER.
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OBJECTS: The furtherance of the study of the various branches of Natural History and the preservation of our heritage of indigenous fauna and flora.

MEETINGS: Second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. at the Cairns Education Centre, Greenslopes Street, Edgehill, Cairns.

FIELD DAYS: Sunday before Meeting.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: (Due September 30th).

City and Suburban Members	- $8.00.
Country Members	- $5.00.
Family Membership	- $10.00.

CLUB OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT	- MR. TED BILL
HON. SECRETARY	- MRS. DAWN MAGARRY
HON. TREASURER	- MS. ANN SUTHERLAND

60th YEAR. NO. 193. JUNE, 1992.

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Each author is responsible for the facts and opinions expressed in his or her own article. All correspondence to authors of articles in this Journal should be addressed C/- Post Office Box 991. Cairns. Qld. 4870

This issue of the 'NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALIST' is the 193rd edition since its beginning is October 1932 - 60 years ago. Members may be interested in an extract from the Club's first Official Publication. Volume 1. Number 1.

ORIGIN OF THE CLUB. by DR. HUGO FLECKER.

The idea of a naturalists club occurred during a meeting of the Cairns Tableland Publicity Association in June 1932. A discussion arose concerning the trustee-ship of Lake Barrine, whether local trustees or trustees appointed by the Government were the more fit to preserve all the natural features of such an extremely interesting locality.

It was felt that the most capable body to advise upon the best method of preservation, would be a Club, specially interested in natural history. As no such club existed it became a matter of urgency to those who had brought the matter forward to have one established.

Accordingly, at the next monthly meeting of the Publicity Association, held on July 19th, it was moved that the mayor of Cairns (Alderman W. Collins) be requested to convene a meeting for the purpose of establishing a Field Naturalists Club.

It was believed that such an organization would gratify its own members and would be of permanent benefit to the community. The Club would not only be useful in drawing attention to the many natural features of the district, but could act as guides to other investigators. Besides, the members would be trained to distinguish natural phenomena and to classify them. The mayor henceforth, convened a meeting which was held in the Cairns Council Chambers on August 19th. Those present constituted a committee to form such a Club. A well attended meeting was held at the Harbour Board Office on August 29th, which drew up rules, fixed subscriptions and appointed Officials. The rules were formally ratified at the next meeting on September 12th.

VICE REGAL MEMBER. While in Cairns recently His Excellency, the Governor of Queensland (Sir Leslie Orme-Wilson) accepted an invitation to become an Honorary Member of the North Queensland Naturalists Club.

GREEN ISLAND EXCURSION. The first official Club Excursion will be held on Sunday October 9th when members will visit Green Island. The launch 'Merinda' will leave Hayles Wharf at 9am and will return early in the evening. The return fare will be 5/- and it is hoped that many members will participate.

WATTLES OF THE CAIRNS REGION.

The wattles are the best known of all the Australian plants, there being few places or habitats from which they are absent. Many of the 700/800 species of Acacia native to Australia are, I believe, more correctly placed in Racosperma. The splitting of Acacia into three genera, Acacia, Racosperma and Senegalia has caused a great deal of debate and some experts disagree with this arrangement. I personally support the view of Pedley on this matter, but will for the purpose of this short article, refer to all as Acacia even though they may be more correctly placed in Racosperma.

The area I refer to as the Cairns/Mulgrave Region is as a matter of convenience, that the area administered by the Cairns City Council and the Yarrabah Community Council. The vegetation of this area is very diverse and many different vegetation types and plant species occur. It could be argued that most plant species are described or at least known from collections. Information on the distribution, ecology, flowering and fruiting periods etc. are in many cases, unknown. The following check list contains all species of Acacia known to occur in this region.

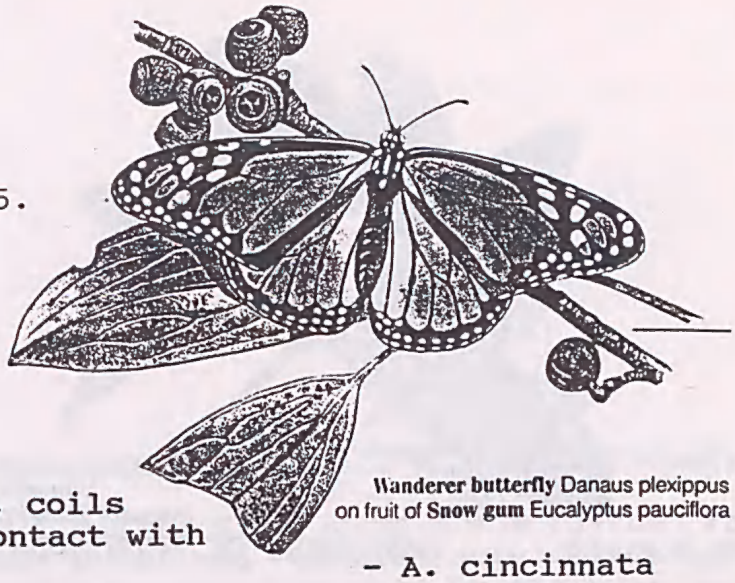
There is every possibility that there are species yet to be recorded for this region. The author would be grateful for any information on any species not mentioned in this article that are found within the study area.

CHECK LIST OF SPECIES WITH ALTERNATIVE CLASSIFICATION.

Acacia aulacocarpa var. aulacocarpa	Rascosperma aulacocarpum var. aulacocarpum
Acacia calyculata	Rascosperma calyculatum
Acacia cincinnata	Rascosperma cincinnatum
Acacia crassicarpa	Rascosperma crassicarpum
Acacia falciformis	Rascosperma falciforme
Acacia flavescens	Rascosperma flavescens
Acacia hemignosta	Rascosperma hemignostum
Acacia holosericea	Rascosperma holosericeum
Acacia humifusa	Rascosperma humifusum
Acacia hylonoma	Rascosperma hylonomum
Acacia leptocarpa	Rascosperma leptocarpum
Acacia mangium	Rascosperma mangium
Acacia oraria	Rascosperma orarium
Acacia polystachya	Rascosperma polystachyum
Acacia racospermoides	Rascosperma paniculatum
Acacia simsii	Rascosperma simsii

A KEY TO WATTLES OF THE CAIRNS/MULGRAVE REGION. BY ROB JAGO.

1.	Flowers globular. i.e. balls		2.
	Flowers spikes. i.e. bats		6.
2.	Stems and branchlets covered with a white and powdery bloom.	- A. racospermoides	
	Stems and branchlets not as above.		3.
3.	Seed pods with a raised section alternating from side to side.		4.
	Seed pods raised over seed on both sides of the pod.		5.
4.	Phyllodes usually 5-7 mm broad and 10 cm in length, 1-3 prominent nerves.	- A. simsii	
	Phyllodes usually 7-20 mm broad and 8-15 cm in length, up to 10 prominent nerves.	- A. hylonoma	
5.	Phyllodes usually 15-35 mm broad and 5-8 cm in length. Young phyllodes with a bluish grey/silver sheen.	- A. oraria	
	Phyllodes ususally large 50 mm broad and 20 mm in length, curved with 1-5 small teeth like glands on the bottom margin.	- A. flavescens	
	Phyllodes usually 15-30 mm broad and 9-14 cm in length with one prominent nerve that has the appearance of a mid rib.	- A. flaciformis	
	Phyllodes usually 4-12 mm broad and 4-9 cm in length, grey in colour with 2-3 prominent nerves.	- A. hemignosta	
6.	Pods broad and woody, transversely nerved, more than 15 mm broad.		7.
	Pods not woody or transversely nerved.		8.
7.	Pods usually 20-40 mm broad - more or less flat, not twisted.	- A. crassicarpa	
	Pods usually 10-25 mm broad, twisted.	- A. aulacocarpa var. aulacocarpa	



Wanderer butterfly Danaus plexippus
on fruit of **Snow gum** Eucalyptus pauciflora

8. Pods tightly coiled, coils compressed and in contact with each other. - A. cincinnata

Pods not as above. 9.

9. Pods usually coiled and twisted intertwined to form a twisted mass. 10.

Pods not intertwined so as to form a twisted mass. 11.

10. Phyllodes 50-100 mm broad and 12-25 cm in length, green in colour. Large tree to 30 m tall. - A. mangium

Phyllodes with a soapy feel, blue green to blue gray in colour, a shrub to small tree, seldom more than 5 m tall. - A. holosericea

11. Phyllodes hairy. - A. humifusa

Phyllodes not hairy. 12.

12. Phyllodes 4-20 mm broad and 4.5-13 cm in length, pods 3-5 mm diameter and 9-11 cm in length, flowers white to silvery cream, shrub to 2.5 m tall. - A. calyculata

Phyllodes 10-22 mm broad and 12-21 cm in length, pod flat 2-5 mm broad and 2-12 cm in length, usually curved flowers golden yellow. - A. leptocarpa

Phyllodes 16-25 mm broad and 9-20 cm in length, pods 6-8 mm broad and 10-15 cm in length, often curved and twisted but never forming a twisted mass, flowers pale yellow. - A. polystachya

BY: ROB JAGO.

Turpentine
Syncarpia glomulifera

T.R.E.A.T. ... TEN YEARS OF TREE PLANTING ON THE ATHERTON TABLELANDS.

T.R.E.A.T. is a community based organization of people who want to encourage the planting of native rainforest trees on the Evelyn and Atherton Tablelands. Since 1982 when T.R.E.A.T. started with thirty members, it has grown into a membership of four hundred.

Tree planting is practical conservation and many people find that this activity gives them a good outlet for their feeling of wanting to do something to help the environment.

T.R.E.A.T.'s membership includes farmers, urban dwellers and folk living on rural residential blocks which were previously bare of trees. As one privilege of their membership, members receive ten trees per year from the tree nursery run by the Community Nature Conservation Section of the National Parks Service at Lake Eacham. Over the years, these trees planted and cared for by members, have 'greened' the Tablelands in their thousands.

Every Friday morning a group of T.R.E.A.T. workers gathers at the nursery to do the nursery work for the Officer in Charge, Nigel Tucker. They pot up the young trees, do weeding and organize the pots in the different sections of the nursery. Trees grown in this way can be seen in the plantings in the Lake Barrine National Park by the side of the Gillies Highway.

Not only does T.R.E.A.T. work co-operatively with National Parks, but it also works with the other Government Departments and local Councils and Clubs. Tree plantings have been made beside Lake Tinaroo by the Q.W.R.C., both Eacham and Atherton Shire Councils and various schools.

Finance for these projects comes from the annual subscriptions of $5.00 per year per family and from donations. Greening Australia has been supportive for several years with small grants from the 'One Billion Trees' programme. Members receive five newsletters per year and attend field days and working bees as well as two meetings annually.

The T.R.E.A.T. committee, which includes experts and practical tree planters, is pleased to see the larger number of trees now being planted. It is so quick to cut down a tree yet it takes so long to replace it by growing another! T.R.E.A.T. hopes to see tree planting become respected and popular job for professionals and workers on a bigger scale in our land.

BY: Joan. M. Wright (PRESIDENT).

SIGHTING OF 'FRECKLED DUCK' (Dendrocygna naevosa). BY: DAWN MAGARRY.

EASTER 1992 saw our usual 'Naturalists Club' camp at Georgetown for birdwatching. The countryside had dried out considerably since the rain earlier in the year, but several large dams in the area were still full with plenty of waterlillies and water birds including Pink Eared Ducks, Grey Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Hardhead and both species of Whistling Duck.

We had heard from a visitor that an Australasian Shoveller had been sighted two weeks previous, but the only different duck in view was found by our President, Ted. It had a very dark speckled appearance, a small peak at the back of the head and a very 'scooped' bill.

The only duck I could think of fitting this description was the Freckled Duck, but it seemed such a long way from its normal range. So it was out with the field guides - three different ones - Slater, Pizzey and Simpson & Day. Indeed a 'Freckled Duck' it was proved to be!

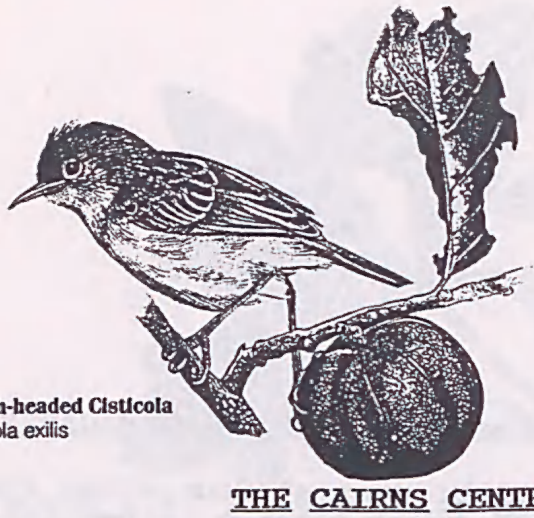
It could be seen clearly with both telescope and binoculars. Pizzey and Slater show its distribution well south, with Simpson & Day as a vagrant to the area.

The duck had disappeared next day!

According to Slater the Freckled Duck's usual range is freshwater swamps and lakes in south-west and south-east Australia. Pizzey states that when the conditions are favourable its range can extend to south-west Queensland. Sporadic sightings have been recorded in southern Kimberley, Western Australia, the top end and south Northern Territory, eastern Queensland and north-east New South Wales.

REFERENCE: P. Slater 'Field Guide to Australian Birds'.
G. Pizzey 'Field Guide to Birds of Australia'.

River Red Gum
Eucalyptus camaldulensis



Golden-headed Cisticola
Cisticola exilis

THE CAIRNS CENTRAL SWAMP. BY: DAWN MAGARRY.

TO CELEBRATE the club's sixtieth year we feel we should look at our local environment and therefore plan to concentrate our activities on the Cairns Central Swamp - or what remains of it.

The area consists of natural sand ridges interspersed with fresh and salt water swamps. Predominate vegetation includes melaleucas, wattles, eucalypts, palms and pendanus, with many introduced species. Detailed vegetation of the area will be described in future publications.

The Club recently conducted a walk through two sections of the swamp. Below is a list of the birds we saw on this occasion (April, 1992) plus others personally observed on two previous visits during November 1991 and January of this year. Regular observations will be carried out during the next twelve months.

Black Necked Stork	Xenorhynchus asiaticus
Little Egret	Egretta garzetta
Great Egret	Egretta alba
White Faced Heron	Ardea novaehollandiae
Mangrove Heron	Butorides striatus
Black Bittern	Ixobrychus flavicollis
Royal Spoonbill	Platalea regia
Sacred Ibis	Threskiornis aethiopica
Whistling Kite	Haliastur sphenurus
Brahminy Kite	Haliastur indus
Bush Hen	Gallinulaolivacea
Masked Lapwing	Vanellus miles
Sharp Tailed Sandpiper	Calidris acuminata
Grey Tailed Tattler	Tringa brevipes
Marsh Sandpiper	Tringa stagnatilis
Greenshank	Tringa nebularia
Common Sandpiper	Tringa hypoleucos
Peaceful Dove	Geopelia striata
Spotted Turtledove	Streptopelia chinensis
Rainbow Lorikeet	Trichoglossus haematodus
Double Eyed Fig Parrot	Psittaculirostris diophthalma
Brush Cuckoo	Cuculus variolosus
Little Bronze Cuckoo	Chrysococcyx malayanus
Pheasant Coucal	Centropus phasianinus
Common Koel	Eudynamis scalopacea
Laughing Kookaburra	Dacelo novaeguineae
Rainbow Bee-eater	Merops ornatus

CURRENT BIRD LIST OF THE CAIRNS CENTRAL SWAMP... (CONTINUED)

Rufous Owl	Ninox rufa
White Rumped Swiftlet	Collocalia spodiopygia
Welcome Swallow	Hirundo neoxena
White Bellied Cuckoo Shrike	Coracina papuensis
Varied Triller	Lalage leucomela
Cicadabird	Coracina tenuirostris
Black Faced Monarch	Monarcha melanopsis
Leaden Flycatcher	Myiagra rebecula
Willie Wagtail	Rhipidura leucophyrs
Golden Headed Cisticola	Cisticola exilis
Red Backed Wren	Malurus melanocephalus
Large Billed Warbler	Gerygone magnirostris
Fairy Warbler	Gerygone palpebrosa
Helmeted Friarbird	Philemon buceroides
White Throated Honeyeater	Melithreptus albogularis
Yellow Spotted Honeyeater	Meliphaga notata
Graceful Honeyeater	Meliphaga gracilis
Yellow Honeyeater	Lichenostomus flavus
Brown Backed Honeyeater	Ramsayornis modestus
Dusky Honeyeater	Myzomela obscura
Brown Honeyeater	Lichmera indistincta
Yellow Bellied Sunbird	Nectorinia jugularis
Mistletoe Bird	Dicaeum hirundinaceum
spice Finch	Lonchura punctulata
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus
Metallic Starling	Aplonis metallica
Yellow Oriole	Oriolus flavocinctus
Figbird	Sphecotheres viridis
Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis
Spangled Drongo	Dicrurus megarhynchus
Magpie Lark	Grallina cyaloleuca
White Breasted Woodswallow	Artamus leucorhynchus
Black Butcherbird	Cracticus quoyi

White-throated gerygone
Gerygone olivacea
on **Pandanus fruit**

THE ORIGIN OF GENERIC NAMES OF QUEENSLAND RAINFOREST TREES.

BY: JAMES A. BAINES

(Continuing a series begun in previous journals. Some of these trees have since been re-classified).

Garcinia. Named by L. after Laurent Garcin, M.D. (1683-1751), a French botanist who travelled widely in India. It is a large guttiferous genus of 400 tropical species, including Queensland's Marblewood or Baconwood and **G. warrenii**, Native Mangosteen. The edible Mongosteen, native of peninsula Malaysia, is **G. Mangostana**; its mane in the Malay language is manggis, whereas the Mango, **Mangifera indica**, is mangga, in fam. Anacardiaceae.

Gardenia. Named by Ellis in 1761 after Dr. Alexander Garden (1730-1791), native of Aberdeenshire, Scotland, correspondent of Linnaeus and for many years a physician in Charleston, South Carolina. Gardenia of men's button-holes and florists' shops is **G. jasminoides**, sometimes called Cape Jasmine, though it is not a jasmine and is native to China. Of the 250 species, Australia has 16 endemica, including **G. ovularis**, listed by Hyland in his card key. Rubiaceae.

Geijera. Names by Schott after J.D. Geiger, a Swedish botanical author. Erik Gustaf Geiger (1783-1847), poet, historian, composer, artist, philosopher, translator of Shakespeare, of the University of Uppsala, spent 1809-10 in England. Best known species is **G. parviflora**, the Wilga of the inland, but there a two rainforest species, **G. salicifolia**, Scrub Wilga, known in the timber industry as Green Satinheart, and **G. paniculata**. Other common names indicating some characteristics of wood are Axegapper, Flintwood, Glasswood, and Greenheart.The genus is in family Rutaceae. In Australia the name is usually pronounced geejera, with the initial g hard, but in Sweden the surname is pronounced yeier. Wilger is an aboriginal name for the tree.

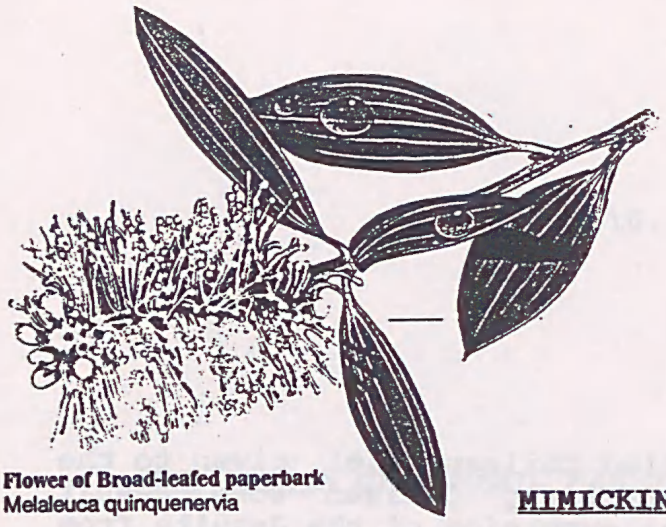
Geissois. Gk geisson, a hem, the eaves of a house, projecting part of roof; alluding to overlapping seeds. **G. benthamii** (named by Mueller after George Bentham, 1800-1844, whom he helped greatly in the work 'flora australiensis', and who collaborated with Hooker in 'Genera Plantarum') is known as Brush Mahogany, Red Carrabeen, and Leather-jacket. **G. biagiana** is Northern Brush Mahogany. The genus is in family Cunoniaceae.

Gevuina. Native name of the so called Chilean Hazel, given to the genus by Juan Ignacio Molina (c.1738-1829), Chilean born Jesuit priest, who fled to Italy in 1768 on the expulsion of the Jesuits from Chile; he lived for 55 years in Bologna, where in 1782 he published a flora of Chile in Italian and Latin. There are only 3 species - one in Chile, one in New Guinea and one in Queensland. **G. bleasdalei** (after Dr. J. Bleasdale), known as Blush Silky Oak. Proteaceae.

Gillbeea. F.M. Bailey states that Mueller named the genus after Dr. William Gillbee. Britten & Boulger, in 'A Biographical Index of British and Irish Botanists', include an entry for William Hall Gilby, M.D. (Edinburgh)(died 1821?); it is possible that these two are one and the same man, as Gilboy and Gilbee are three spelling variants of the anglicized version of the Scots Gaelic surname MacGiolla-Buidhe, meaning 'son of the adherent of the yellow haired man'. Gilby wrote on 'Respiration in Plants' in the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal. **G. adenopetala**, Pink Alder, is a North Queensland species; there are only two, the other being in New Guinea. Family Cunoniaceae.

Glochidion. Named by the Forsters because of the glochidiate style. i.e. bearing bristles with hooked tips (from Gk glochin, a projecting point, of the generic name **Triglochin**, Water-ribbons and Arrowgrass). This euphorbiaceous genus has 300 species, of which 13 are Australian including G ferdinandi, the Cheese Tree, named by J. Mueller of Aargau after his famous fellow botanist namesake Ferdinand, to whom he was not related but with whom he was in friendly correspondence. Francis says that the wood is susceptible to attack by borers.

Gmelina. Francis states that this genus was named after 'John George Gmelin', which is an anglicization of Johan Georg Gmelin (1709-1755), who explored Siberia as far as the Lena River with Bering and others, 1733-43, and was professor of botany and chemistry in Tubingen, his home city in Germany, from 1749. Bailey, however, states that Linnaeus named the genus in honour of 'S. Gmelin, a German Naturalist'; if this is true, the man honoured would be Samuel Gottlieb Gmelin (1744-1774), nephew of the above, botanist and traveller, who explored S.E. Russia for plants. To complicate matters, Smith & Stearn, in 'A Gardener's Dictionary of Plant Names' say the genus was named 'for Johann Gottleib Gmelin (1709-1755)', seemingly giving the uncle the nephew's middle name. Three other members of this scientific family of Tubingen made important discoveries in chemistry and medicine. **G. leichhardtii**, White Beech or Grey Teak in the timber trade, but of course it is not related to the true beeches (**Fagus** in Fagaceae), although the Teak of commerce (**Tectona grandis**) is in the same family, Verbenaceae. **G. fasciculiflora** is known as North Queensland White Beech.



Flower of Broad-leafed paperbark
Melaleuca quinquenervia

MIMICKING SUNBIRD.

By: LYN McALLISTER.

For the past month my family and I have observed a male sunbird perched just two metres outside our window, imitating other bird calls. Most obvious are the plover and the pee-wee. I have also recognized the myna birds and wagtail. There are other calls as well, but I cannot identify them as I am not practiced at bird-watching. His own calls are interspersed in the song.

He prefers to sing with background accompaniment, such as wind, rain or noisy roosting birds at twilight. In windy weather he has been there most days. The most usual time is late afternoon around 4 to 6pm although he has also mimicked at other times during the day, and in two other places. I have made a few sound recordings which are of fair quality.

This could be fairly common as I have since heard and seen another male sunbird mimicking at the Primary School, Mossman. I have not been able to find anyone who has observed this before, so am writing to your newsletter. I hope you find this as fascinating as I do.

FLORENCE GLADYS GEDDES.

By: MARION CASSELS.

At the beginning of March, Gladys Geddes, a one time member of the 'North Queensland Naturalists Club' died, her funeral being held at the Forest Home Crematorium on March 11th.

Gladys was born in Cooktown in 1899, the daughter of Albert Meeks and a Miss Eichorn. Albert Meeks was a great naturalist who did most of his work in Papua New Guinea. He made many discoveries of great value to science. His wife was also from a great naturalist family (Butterfly lovers will know of the Eichorn Crow), no doubt Gladys inherited her love of the bush from them. She moved to Brisbane when she was six. Gladys married Robert Geddes then moved to Cairns. They had two children, one of whom died in infancy, the other, Beverley, married Noel Burman. When her husband died, Gladys ran a family boarding house - 123 Esplanade, Cairns. Getting on in years, she left 123 Esplanade, and built herself a nice little house at Clifton Beach, where we had many a happy committee meeting. Gladys herself was on the committee for many years and attended most of the field trips with her little dog - who I might add - frightened every bird within cooee!

Ill health saw Gladys move out of her home to the Mary Potter Home where she spent her last days.

Gladys - we have very happy memories of you and greatly appreciate the work you did for the 'Nats' when in good health.